

To the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee,

In their invasion of Ukraine, the government of Russia has committed numerous atrocities against the people of Ukraine. Perhaps the most infamous of these was the rape and murder of the inhabitants of Bucha, which was praised by Russian commentators on the social media platform telegram, who proceeded to call for more atrocities of this nature to be committed¹.

Another war crime committed by the Kremlin is the large-scale abduction of Ukrainian children, who are sent to Russia to be raised as Russians². The ICC has already issued an arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin³ because of this crime, but, for obvious reasons it has not been executed, Putin is still in control of Russia, and children are still being kidnapped.

According to the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 'Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group' is an act of genocide⁴. If Australia's leaders will not do everything in their power to stop a genocide, then are they leading us righteously? Can our allies rely on them?

Furthermore, a Russian victory over Ukraine - even a partial one where Russia retains occupied territories such as Crimea – would serve to encourage Putin and the Russian government to repeat such aggression and war crimes against other nations. Georgia is an obvious next target for the Kremlin.

All human beings have a moral obligation to stand against acts of genocide and war. As such, the Australian government must do more to help the people of Ukraine resist Russia's genocidal invasion. A Ukrainian victory would stop Russia's genocide and discourage Putin from pursuing any more imperialist ambitions against Russia's neighbours. It would save the lives of people who are as real as yourselves and everyone you love.

Regards,

Bryn Watkins

¹ Ian Garner, "'We've Got to Kill Them': Responses to Bucha on Russian Social Media Groups", *Journal of Genocide Research* 25, no. 3-4 (2022): 418-425, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14623528.2022.2074020>

² Sarah El Deeb, Anastasiia Shvets, and Elizaveta Tilna, "How Moscow grabs Ukrainian kids and makes them Russians", AP News, accessed May 2, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/ukrainian-children-russia-7493cb22c9086c6293c1ac7986d85ef6>

³ Isobel Koshiw, "Putin's alleged war crimes: who are the Ukrainian children being taken by Russia?", *The Guardian*, accessed May 2, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/17/vladimir-putin-war-crimes-icc-arrest-warrant-ukraine-children>

⁴ "Genocide", United Nations, accessed May 2, 2024, <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>